WHEN I WAS
IN A BIG SLUMP,
ON THE COACH'S ADVICE,
I TRIED BATTING
WITH ONE LEG ON
THE GROUND.

2 WEEKS LATER,
I WAS BACK TO NORMAL
AS IF THE SLUMP
HAD NEVER EVEN
HAPPENED (LOL).

TERAJIMA YUUJI

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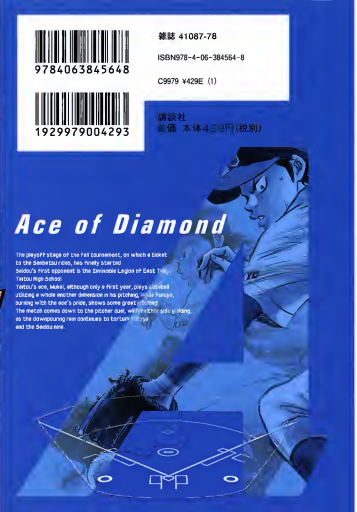
Ace of Diamond
The playoff stage of the Fall tournament, on which a ticket to the Senbatsu finals hinges, has finally started!
Seido's first opponent is the invincible League of East Tama, Tenzu High School.
Tenzu's ace, Muki, although only a first year, plays baseball utilizing a whole another dimension in his pitching, Inner Range. Burning with the ace's pride, Seido's some great pitched!
The match comes down to the pitcher duel, with Furuya and Kataoka, as the downpouring rain continues to torture the ace and the Seidou ene.

絶賛好評発売中
KC 寺嶋裕二作品
■GIANT STEP 全4巻
■ダイヤのA ①～
以下続刊

COVER ILLUSTRATION ★ YUJI TERAJIMA
COVER DESIGN ★ KAZUHIRO FUKUMORI
2011.10
KC

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寺嶋裕二

ダイヤのA

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CHAPTER 238

THIS GENERATION

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●週刊少年マガジン2011年第24号～第32号

この物語はフィクションであり、
実在の人物・団体・出来事などとは
一切関係ありません。

WE ONLY HAVE THIS DVD THANKS TO TAKASHIMA-SENSEI BORROWING IT FROM AN ACQUAINTANCE OF HERS
ANYONE, KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THEIR NEW TEAM?
WE DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THEM.
WE DID PLAY A FEW PRACTICE MATCHES WITH THEM, BUT SINCE THEY'RE A TEAM FROM THE EAST TOKYO BLOCK,
COUNTING BOTH SUMMER AND SPRING NATIONALS, THEY'VE BEEN TO KOUSHIEN 21 TIMES IN TOTAL,
2 OF THEM THEY WON, BECOMING NATIONAL CHAMPIONS
THEY'RE THE FACE OF KOUSHIEN, SO TO SPEAK, WHO EVEN CAME TO BE CALLED THE *INVINCIBLE LEGION*

A SLUGGER WITH A STRONG THROWING ARM AND THE CAPTAIN *INUI*,
AND *MUKAI*, A FIRST YEAR WHO DEBUTED AT KOUSHIEN.
THEY HAVE A SECOND YEAR PITCHER WHO CAN THROW 140KMPH, BUT...
THE ACTUAL ACE SEEMS TO BE THIS GUY...
BECOMING THE DRIVING FORCE FOR THEIR SCHOOL'S ADVANCEMENT TO THE BEST 16
IN THE FIRST ROUND, TEITOU SWITCHED THE ENTIRE BATTERY, PUTTING THESE TWO IN,
AND AFTERWARDS IT WAS THEM WHO PULLED THE TEAM,

HIS PITCHES ARE PROBABLY GONNA BE A PAIN TO DEAL WITH BECAUSE YOU CAN HARDLY SEE THEIR TRAJECTORY...
YEAH... LEFT-HANDED BATTERS ARE ESPECIALLY AT A DISADVANTAGE, BECAUSE TO THEM IT WILL FEEL LIKE THE PITCH IS FLYING AT THEM FROM BEHIND THE BACK...
A first year...
WITH SCREWBALL AS HIS WINNING SHOT, HUH?
A LEFTY SIDEARM PITCHER
め、ざせ甲子園！
THIS IS A SIMPLE TACTIC, BUT LET'S STICK TO IT.
WE'LL IDENTIFY LOW BREAKING BALLS CAREFULLY
AND HIT ONLY THOSE PITCHES THAT APPEAR HITTABLE.
PUT THEM OFF BALANCE WITH ATTACKS INVOLVING BASERUNNING.
AND DON'T FORGET ABOUT HIT AND RUN!

OF COURSE, OUR OPPONENTS WON'T COME UNPREPARED EITHER, THROWING SOME KIND OF PLAN AT US AS WELL.
THE QUESTION IS, WHETHER YOU'LL ABLE TO STICK TO YOUR BASEBALL WHEN THEY DO OR NOT.
FIRST, YOU'VE GOT TO ENJOY FIGHTING A STRONG OPPONENT!
THIS IS THE WAY FOR YOU TO WIN THIS BATTLE!

RUNNING INTO A CANDIDATE FOR WINNING THE TOURNAMENT RIGHT IN THE FIRST ROUND
WELL, THAT'S IT FOR THEM.
YESSIR!
THIS HOPELESS MATCH NEEDS TO LEAVE HIM THE BENEFIT OF EXPERIENCE AT LEAST.
SINCE THEY'RE NOW BASICALLY OUT OF CHANCES ANYWAY, I WANT FURUYA TO PITCH THE WHOLE GAME ALONE ALL THE MORE
IN ANY CASE,
MY TIME IS FASTLY APPROACHING...

I'LL GO CALL DIBS ONLY ON THE PLAYERS I LIKE
AND USING THIS OPPOR-TUNITY,
ARGH~ DARN IT!
STILL TOO HIGH, HUH!
NO, YOUR PITCH'S CONDITION ITSELF IS NOT BAD!

TRYING TO AIM MY PITCH TOO HARD DOESN'T YIELD GOOD RESULTS...
I SUSPECTED IT...
FUH
IS PROBABLY WHAT CAUSES ME TO CHARGE THE PITCH WITH TOO MUCH FORCE...
AND MY CONSTANT INTENT WATCHING THE MITT
RELAX...
WHAT ARE YOU SMILING FOR?
SMILE
RELAX...
I SHOULD CALL THE POWER FORTH
ONLY IN THIS ONE INSTANCE,

SHH!!
TRANFERRING ALL OF IT INTO MY FINGER-TIPS!
TOK!

NICE THROW, SAWA-MURA!
I THINK SO, TOO!!!
HA HA HA...
THAT'S IT! THAT'S TOTALLY IT!
BUT DESPITE THAT, HIS PITCHES FEEL FASTER SOMEHOW?
From relaxing...
for
PROBABLY BECAUSE HE GOT RID OF EXCESSIVE STRAIN...?
NO!
NOT THE TIME FOR THAT - GOTTA MEMORIZE IT WITH MY BODY FIRST!
I SHOULD WRITE IT DOWN WHILE I STILL REMEMBER IT!
Calm down!
HE'S THROWING PAYING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO HIS CONTROL, AS MUCH AS IT'S POSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE LIKE SAWAMURA ANYWAY...

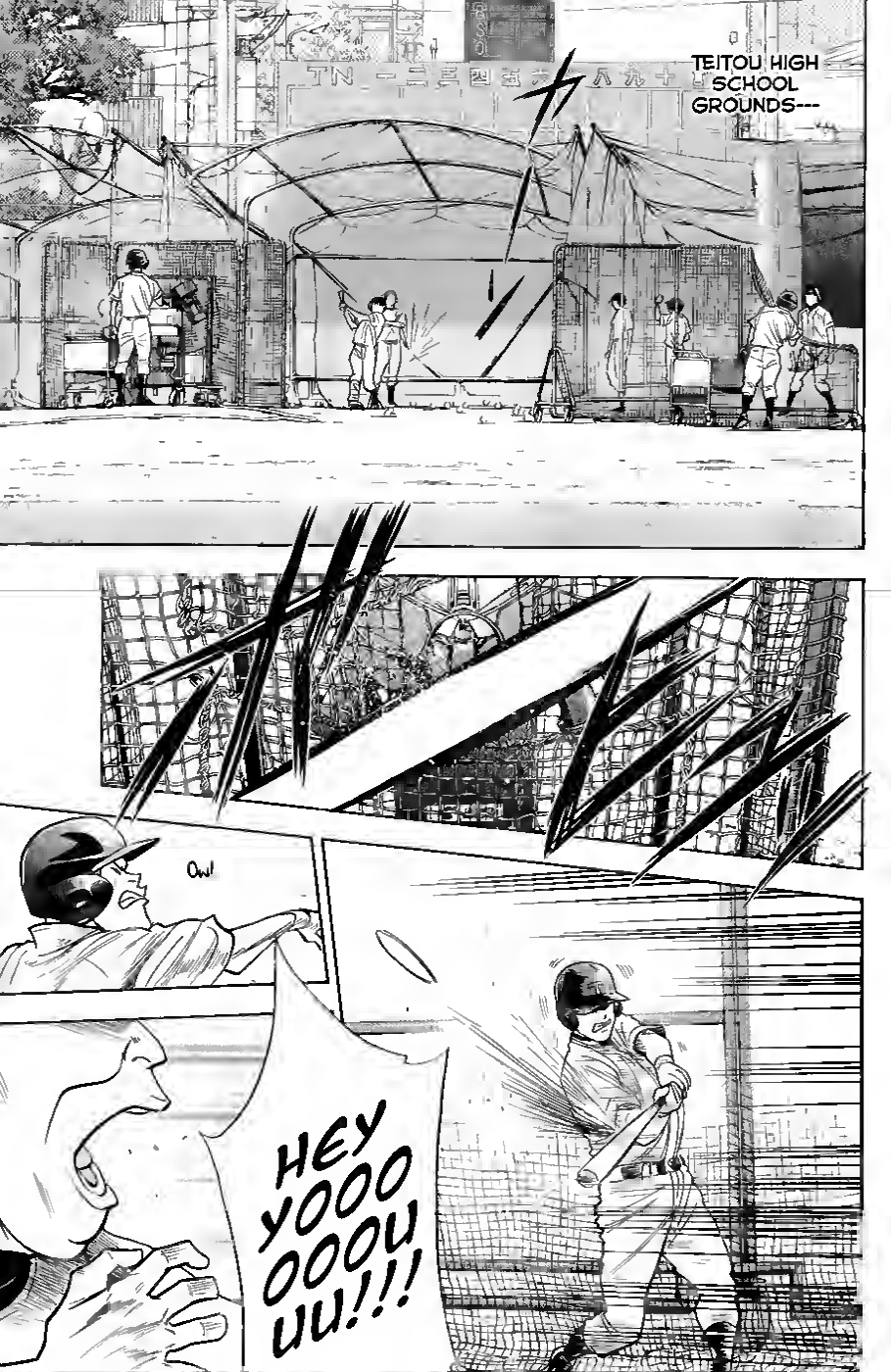
I DON'T FEEL ANY INCLINATION TO USE HIM IN OFFICIAL MATCHES.
SINCE HE CAN'T THROW TO THE INSIDE,
NOT BAD... BUT.
I CAN PUT HIM TO OTHER GOOD USES.
STILL, EVEN IF I CAN'T LET HIM PITCH IN MATCHES,
YES, I MEAN YOU OVER THERE, DROOPY BROWS!
SERGEANT!
COULD IT BE THAT YOU HAVE NOTHING TO DO AT THE MOMENT?!

IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE NOTHING BETTER TO DO.
OH, COME ON! YOU'RE ALWAYS JUST NAPPING ON THE BENCH, NO?
YOU SPEND YOUR TIME DOING NOTHING IN PARTICULAR, JUST OBSERVING US EVERY DAY, NO?
IF YOU HAVE NOTHING BETTER TO DO, COULD YOU UMPIRE FOR ME?
GRIN
IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE THAT YOU MIGHT BE FEELING A LITTLE LOST, WHAT WITH SUDDENLY FINDING YOURSELF AMONG PEOPLE YOU DON'T KNOW,
BUT DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TIME TO OPEN UP AND JOIN IN WITH EVERYONE?
WHAT AM I, A TRANSFER STUDENT?
PLEASE FORGIVE HIM, HE'S, UH, THAT, YOU SEE.
...

No need to be shy!
WHEN I THROW A STRIKE, PLEASE CALL "STRIKE!" IN A LOUD VOICE!
IS HE TRYING TO SUCK UP TO ME, KNOWING THAT I'LL BE THE NEXT MAIN COACH...?
WHAT A HEAVY GAIT!
stomp
stomp
What's wrong?
THE LIKES OF HIM ARE NOT SMART ENOUGH FOR IT...
I'M WEAK...
WE KEEP TRAINING BECAUSE WE DON'T WANT TO LOSE!
NO...
OF COURSE
WE WON'T COMPLAIN ABOUT IT BEING TOUGH OR HOT!
SAY...
WHY DON'T YOU SWITCH TO THROWING SIDEARM?

YOU KEEP TRAINING BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT TO LOSE...
THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID TO ME BEFORE, REMEMBER?
HUH?
EH?!
THEN, INSTEAD OF OVERWORKING YOUR ARM HERE,
YOU SHOULD BECOME A BATTING-PRACTICE PITCHER FOR YOUR TEAM.

YOU'RE NOT WORTH MORE
全国制覇
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
RIGHT NOW ANYWAY.
MEANWHILE---


TEITOU HIGH SCHOOL GROUNDS---
Owl
HEY YOOO OOOU UU!!!

USE THE HEAD OF THE BAT TO SLAM IT WITH A BAM!!!
WHACCHA DOING?!
DON'T PING-PONG BAT IT, DOLT!
WHACCHA DOING DESTROYING YOUR SWING?!
TEITOU HIGH SCHOOL MAIN COACH
OKAMOTO IPPACHI
DOES A PITCHER WHO THROWS THAT FAST REALLY EXIST?
HAHA. THE MACHINE IS GOING TOO FAST!
YOU DIDN'T COME TO THE PRACTICE MATCH WE PLAYED WITH SEIDOU, SO YOU DON'T KNOW,
BUT YEAH, SUCH A GUY DOES EXIST! A FIRST YEAR LIKE YOU, TO BOOT..
Hmm.

WHATEVER... I'M NOT OBLIGED TO CHECK OUT ALL THE PITCHERS FROM THE WEST BLOCK.
HE PITCHED IN THE FINAL AGAINST INAJITSU AND IS ALSO A FIRST YEAR.
THEY ALSO HAVE AN IRREGULAR LEFTY PITCHER.
BESIDES, THOSE TWO...
THEY'RE NOT FROM TOKYO, ARE THEY?
CAUSE I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THEM.
I DON'T LIKE IT...

NO.1 PITCHER OF THIS GENERATION...
...IS ME!
10

I WON'T LET THOSE OUTSIDERS SWAGGER AROUND!
TEITOU HIGH SCHOOL 1ST YEAR
MUKAI TAIYOU
GRIN
NICE THROW!
HOW'S THAT A PLACE FOR A DRAMATIC PAUSE?!

Ace of Diamond

……
COME ON, SAWA-MURA!
HERE I GO~ ~~~!!!

CHAPTER 239
STUMBLINGLY

AAA
AAAAA
WAHAHAHA
HOW DID YOU LIKE MY SIDEARM PITCH?!
IT CAN BE PUT TO SOME USE, RIGHT?
SAWAMURA! IT'S IN! IT'S A STRIKE!

THERE HAS TO BE A LIMIT TO HOW CLUMSY ONE CAN BE...
Lonsy
I-IS IT THAT BAD?!
FUNNY, FUNNY.
EH?!
...YUP, AMUSING.
(IN MONOTONE)
NICE TRICK, UH-HUH.
I HEARD OUR NEXT OPPONENT WILL BE A SOUTHPAW SIDEARMER, RIGHT?!
SAME AGE AS ME!
SO AS THE ONLY SOUTHPAW I DECIDED TO GIVE THE TEAM A HELPING HAND...!
DID YOU COME UP WITH THAT IDEA ON YOUR OWN?
WHAT?!
Hee~
Hoho~

SIR, NO SIR! THE SERGEANT IS TO CREDIT!
HIS ADVICE WAS MY MOTIVA-TION!
WHO?
SERGE-ANT?
SAY...
WHY DON'T YOU SWITCH TO THROWING SIDEARM?
.....

THEN, INSTEAD OF... OVERWORKING YOUR ARM HERE,
YOU SHOULD BECOME A BATTING-PRACTICE PITCHER FOR YOUR TEAM
YOU KEEP TRAINING BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT TO LOSE THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID TO ME BEFORE REMEMBER?
A-A PITCHER FOR BATTING PRACTICE?
今日学べ
HAHA... I SEE THERE ALSO WAS AN OPTION LIKE THAT FOR ME, HUH...
AND THROWING AGAINST AN ACTUAL BATTER WILL HELP ME PRACTICE TOO...
AND...
TO MAKE THINGS WORSE, HE WANTS SAWAMURA TO SWITCH TO PITCHING SIDEARM...?

IF IT HELPS THE TEAM,
I DON'T REALLY MIND.
H-HEY SAWAMURA!!! ARE YOU SERIOUS?!
ARE YOU REALLY OK WITH THAT?!
—HOO... SURPRISINGLY, HE'S AWARE OF HIS PLACE, HUH...
BOSS!
I'M READY TO THROW TO THE BATTERS!

AND I COULD THROW NOT JUST SIDEARM BUT ALSO UNDERHAND IF YOU WANT ME TO!!!
WE HAVE 4 DAYS TILL THE MATCH, RIGHT?!
IF YOU JUST ORDER ME TO, I'LL BE YOUR BATTING-PRACTICE PITCHER FOR AS LONG AS YOU NEED ME TO!
YOU... DO YOU EVEN UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING ?
SAWA-MURA...
EIJUN-KUN...
N ha a a
YOU'RE BASICALLY OFFERING OUT OF YOUR OWN WILL TO BECOME JUST A SIDE SUPPORTER FOR THE TEAM
.....

I DON'T NEED A LOUSY SIDEARMER.
GET OFF THE MOUND, YOU'RE IN THE WAY OF OUR PRACTICE.
IN THE WAAAY?!
IN...
BUT IF I CAN HELP THE TEAM AT LEAST A LITTLE THIS WAY--
SAWA-MURA.
START WARMING UP
NGU GU...
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M ALL EAGER TO DO THIS EITHER...!

HAVEN'T YOU BEEN TRYING TO POLISH THE LOW AND AWAY PITCH?
WHY DID YOU STOP HALFWAY?
I APPRECIATE YOUR DESIRE TO HELP THE TEAM IN ANY WAY YOU CAN,
BUT WHAT WILL YOU HAVE LEFT IF YOU DESTROY YOUR FORM WITH HALFHEARTED SIDEARM PITCHING?

MIYUKI.
YESSIR!
WE'LL BE DOING A GAME SIMULATION TODAY
HAVE THE PITCHERS GET READY!
AT THE SAME TIME, THE BATTERS' TASK IS TO PRACTICE SIGN PLAYS WITH RUNNERS ON BASE.
PUT PRESSURE AND SHAKE UP THE PITCHERS WHEN YOU'RE ON BASE!

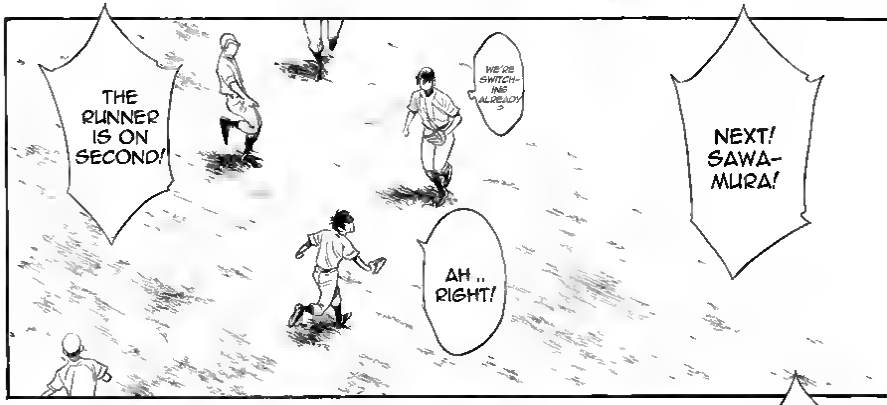
COACH, SHOULD I INCLUDE SAWAMURA INTO THE GAME SIMULATION?
YESSIR!
AND MAKE SURE TO TELL HIM TO PITCH IN HIS OWN STYLE!
...YEAH.
IT WILL BE THE BIGGEST DISSERVICE TO THE TEAM IF ITS INDISPENSABLE FIGHTING POWER
ENDS UP DESTROYING HIS FORM IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TOURNAMENT

'INDISPENSABLE FIGHTING POWER', HE SAYS, EH...
NO OUTS!
THAT'S GOT TO BE A JOKE, RIGHT?
RUNNER ON FIRST!
TURNING HIM INTO A LOUSY SIDEARMER FOR BATTING PRACTICE IS STILL BETTER THAT TAKING NO MEASURE AT ALL IN THE FACE OF THE UPCOMING HOPELESS MATCH...

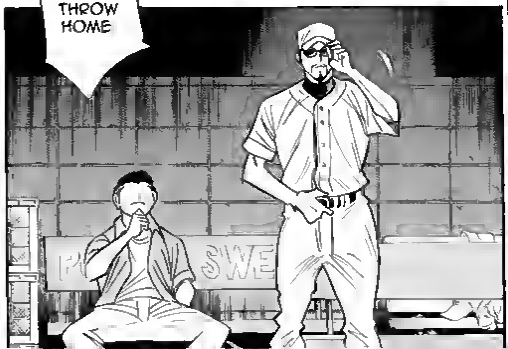
THROW LOW--
STEAL!!!

NGIH!
GOOD, FURUYA! WE'RE RETIRING 'EM!
ONE DOWN!

TEITOU'S BATTERS WILL BE TARGETING THEM, YOU CAN BET ON IT!
NOD
AT THE VERY LEAST, AVOID THROWING STRIKES THOUGHT-LESSLY!
EVEN WITH A BASERUNNER, YOU'LL BE FINE AS LONG AS YOU THROW LOW.


THE RUNNER IS ON SECOND!
WE'RE SWITCH-ING ALREADY?
AH .. RIGHT!
NEXT! SAWA-MURA!

OUT-FIELDERS' THROW HOME



DON'T FORGET THEY MIGHT RESORT TO BUNTING!

SAWA-MURA! 1 OUT!
Pitch to contact
HE CALLED IT A GAME SIMULATION BUT IT'S NOT THAT DIFFERENT FROM THEIR USUAL PRACTICE...
UNLIKE IN SUMMER, WHICH IS CONSIDERED CULMINANT,
IN FALL YOU HAVE TO FIGHT WITH A YOUNG, NOT YET MATURE TEAM.
FOCUS ON THE BATTER!
AND DUE TO THAT, WHAT IS REQUIRED THE MOST IN THIS PERIOD IS THE MAIN COACH'S COMPETENCE.
.....

I WONDER JUST HOW HE'S GOING TO GO ABOUT DEFEATING TEITOU, A TEAM WIDELY KNOWN AS THE INVINCIBLE LEGION...?
OUT OF PURE CURIOSITY...
WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS HIS CAPACITY NOT AS AN EDUCATOR BUT AS A MAIN COACH AND MANAGER.

PITCH TO CONTACT!
Fwh
1 OUT!
HALFWAY?
WHY DID YOU STOP
I STOPPED HALFWAY
BECAUSE I WAVERED AND DOUBTED
SAWAMU-RAAA!!! YOU'RE DOING IT WRONG!!!
YOU'RE TOO TENSE! RELAX! RELAX!!!

HUH?
Smiley~
...SHIT.
I FAILED TO REALIZE THAT THERE'S ONLY ONE THING I CAN DO.
JUST HOW BIG OF AN IDIOT AM I?!

Q: COACH OKAMOTO, WHAT IS BASEBALL TO YOU?

A BLAZE.

ON THE BUILDING: TEITOU MIDDLE SCHOOL & TEITOU HIGH SCHOOL
THIS IS THE PRIMORDIAL FIRE, THROUGH AND THROUGH.

THE SOULS OF PLAYERS AND COACHES CLASH VIOLENTLY,
SENDING SPARKS FLYING.

ダイヤのA

IF THE PLAYERS FIGHTING ON THE BASEBALL FIELD ARE EMPTY SHELLS, THEY WILL NEVER WIN.
OR HOW GREAT AN EVIRONMENT AND FACILITIES YOU MAY BE GIVEN,
NO MATTER HOW POLISHED YOUR BASEBALL TECHNIQUE MAY BE,
ON THE BUILDING: TEITOU MIDDLE SCHOOL & TEITOU HIGH SCHOOL
I'LL CATCH THE NEXT ONE! PLEASE HIT ANOTHER MY WAY!!!
WHACCHA DOING, DOOOLT !!!
CHEEKY, AINCCHA, YA LITTLE ~~~!
WHAT BREATHES LIFE INTO TECHNIQUE AND FLESH IS
SPIRIT.

AND IT'S MY JOB AS THE MAIN COACH TO LIGHT THE FIRE IN MY PLAYERS AND LET THEM BURN.
EXCERPT FROM "LET'S ASK FAMOUS COACHES"
THE BALL! THE BALL!
FOCUS ON IT MORE !!!

CHAPTER 240
ANOTHER DIMENSION

LIKE HELL A TEAM WITH A WEAK FOCUS ON THE BALL CAN TAKE THE PEAK, DOOOLTS!!!
HE TURNS 65 THIS YEAR, RIGHT?
THE BOSS'S PASSIONATE AS EVER, EH

THE TYPE OF TRAINING WHERE HE RAINS HITS TO THE VERY EDGES OF THEIR DEFENSE RANGE,
ALSO KNOWN AS "DIVINE FIELDING".
YA
LITTLE~~~!!!
EVEN THOUGH THE TEAM IS NEW, IT LOOKS LIKE THE STEEL WALL DEFENSE THAT SUSTAINS THEIR FAME AS THE *INVINCIBLE LEGION* IS STILL UP TO PAR.
CHEEKY!

BALL TO SECOND!
Ouch
WHOA

LISTEN CAREFULLY TO MIYUKI'S DIRECTIONS AND FOLLOW THEM PRECISELY, AND YOU'LL BE FINE!
THIS YEAR'S TEITOU HAS MANY FAST RUNNERS, SO IT'S ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO EXACTLY AS HE SAYS
NOD
THAT WAS GOOD, FURUYA!
DON'T BE SO OBVIOUSLY PLEASED WITH YOURSELF!
PROUD
PROUD
NICE FIELDING!
IN A CLUTCH SITUATION, COORDINATE YOUR ACTIONS OUTLOUD IF YOU NEED TO!
IN THE BREAKS BETWEEN PLAYS REGROUP IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SITUATION AND GET READY!
DON'T JUST DRIFT WITH THE FLOW WHEN GOING INTO THE NEXT PLAY!

WH-
WHAT'S
WRONG
WITH
YOU?
lax
lax
lax

STRIKE!
LOW AND AWAY?
YEAH... FEELS LIKE THE BALL IS FLYING FAR AWAY FROM YOU, RIGHT?

AH, YOU THOUGHT SO, TOO?
BUT, UH... THAT LAY SMILING FACE, CAN'T YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?! THERE IS NO WAY I'D BE SMILING ON THE BATTLEFIELD!
THE PITCH JUST NOW WAS GOOD, SAWAMURA!
Heh heh
IT REALLY MAKES FOR BETTER PRACTICE WITH A BATTER IN THE BATTER'S BOX...
CHOOSING THE TARGET POINT I WANNA THROW TO IS SO SATISFYING...
NO MORE
DOUBTS...
WHY DID YOU STOP HALFWAY?
HAVEN'T YOU BEEN TRYING TO POLISH THE LOW AND AWAY PITCH?

I WON'T WAVER ANYMORE!
FACE! YOUR FACE!
Smiley
TOTI
OSSHA AAA!!!
IT'S A BALL, MORON!
FROM THE RIGHT EDGE OF THE PLATE TO LOW AND OUTSIDE...

Oisho
GOING UP AGAINST LEFTY SAWAMURA IS ALREADY GOOD ENOUGH PRACTICE IN ITSELF,
BUT THE ANGLE OF THE THROW FOR A SIDEARMER IS GONNA BE STEEPER...
I HEAR YOU TWO PLAYED AGAINST MUKAI BACK IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, RIGHT?
HOW WAS IT?
WELL. IT'S TRUE THAT MUKAI'S PITCHES ARE TROUBLESOME BECAUSE OF THEIR ANGLE,
IN OUR LAST TOURNAMENT, WE WERE CRUSHED...
IT FELT LIKE HE'S UNDERSONE A COMPLETE CHANGE TURNING INTO BE ST IN THE 3 YEARS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL!
Inside and outside...
BUT THE MAIN PROBLEM IS HIS PECULIAR WAYS OF LOCATING BOTH HIS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THROWS IN THE ZONE!
SIDEARMERS ARE KNOWN FOR NIBBLING AT THE CORNERS OF THE PLATE, BUT IT STILL WAS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT A MIDDLE SCHOOLER, SAME AGE AS US, COULD ACTUALLY BE THAT GOOD AT CORNER WORK.

MOST OF THE BATTERS HE WENT UP AGAINST WERE RETIRED BECAUSE THEY WENT AND SWUNG ON LOW BALLS
HE HARDLY EVER THROWS EASY-TO-HIT PITCHES.
WHEN CORNERED, HE RESORTS TO BREAKING BALLS
NOT SWINGING ON SUCH BALLS
IS THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT YOU HAVE TO MEET IN ORDER TO TAKE MUKAI DOWN.

SHU!
ハロー!
ハロー!

GRIN
NEXT, THE DEEP CORNER!
I HEARD THESE WORDS FOR THE FIRST TIME HALF A YEAR AGO...
THE DEEP CORNER...
YOU'RE GOING INTO A FLASHBACK HERE?!
YEAH... WITH YOUR DEGREE OF CONTROL, YOU CAN PULL OFF PRECISE TARGETING LIKE THAT NO?
AH, WELL...
EH?
DIVIDING THE ZONE INTO 9 SECTIONS?

HUH?
TO BE HONEST, 9 SECTIONS IS NOT ENOUGH FOR ME.
THE BOLD WORDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF A FIRST YEAR KID WHO JUST JOINED THE TEAM STRUCK ME LIKE A LIGHTNING THEN AND THERE
THEY DID?
BUT THE 9 SECTION DIVISION IS ALREADY PLENTY!
NOT ENOUGH? YOU..
WELL... IT'S JUST...
IT'S NOT LIKE WE THROW AT A TARGET DRAWN ON A FLAT SHEET OF PAPER, RIGHT?
IF A PITCHER CAN THROW TO THESE 4 CORNERS, HIS CONTROL IS ALREADY CONSIDERED GOOD
ALL THE MORE IF ADDITIONALLY HE CAN USE THE 9 SECTION GRID FOR LOCATING HIS PITCHES
INSIDE, OUTSIDE, HIGH, LOW.

THE STRIKE ZONE ALSO HAS DEPTH, YOU KNOW?
-SNICKER
YOU COULD EVEN SAY... I'M ADDICTED TO IT LIKE A JUNKIE?
DEPTH ...?!
...
HEHE... I REALIZED IT BACK IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.
AND SINCE THEN PITCHING'S BEEN TREMENDOUSLY FUN TO ME.

AND...
THE 9 SECTION DIVISION OF THE STRIKE ZONE.
INSIDE, OUTSIDE, HIGH, LOW.
THIS IS THE WORLD TAIYOU SEES.
DEPTH.
NOT IN TWO...

BUT IN THREE DIMENSIONS!

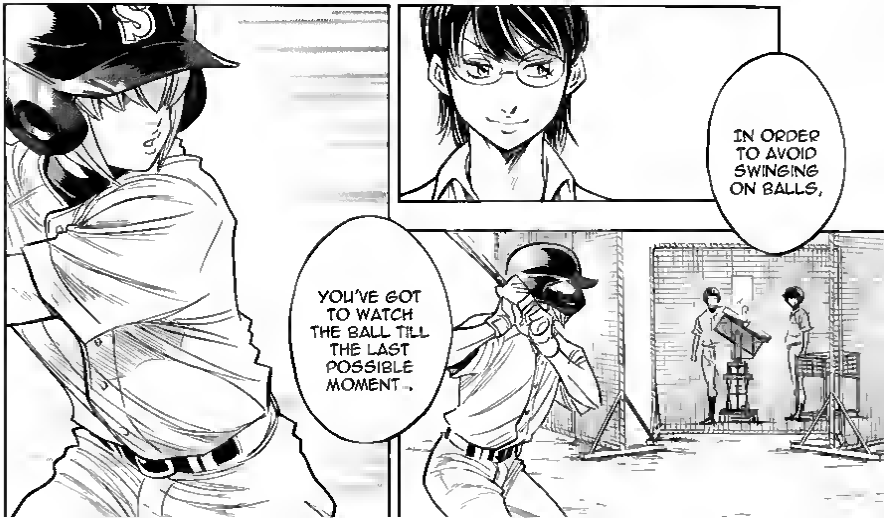
IT'S A STRIKE,
RIGHT?
GRIN
TH-THIS GUY IS LITERALLY FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION!!!
I WAS THUNDERSTRUCK AGAIN!!!
YOU'RE ALWAYS SO OVER THE TOP ABOUT EVERY LITTLE THING, INUI-SAN!
I WON'T LET IT END WITH JUST THE FLASHBACK!
CAN I THROW ALREADY?!

MUKAI TAIYOU
THE PLAYERS WHO HAD ALREADY BEEN CLAD IN BRIGHT FLAMES BEFORE MEETING ME.
SOMETIMES, THOUGH, YOU CAN CHANCE UPON THE EXTREMELY RARE BREED!!
COME TO THINK OF IT, WE HAD A PLAYER FROM THAT BREED ON OUR TEAM
Fuh
THOSE TWO TIMES WHEN WE TOOK THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP...

CHAPTER 241
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A...

YES... SEEMS LIKE THEY ALL STAYED UP LATE TO DO THIS SPECIAL PRACTICE BATTING.

MUKAI-KUN IS ONLY A FIRST YEAR,
BUT HE'S THE TYPE TO LEAD BATTERS BY THE NOSE THROUGH HIS MASTERFUL CORNER WORK


IN ORDER TO AVOID SWINGING ON BALLS,
YOU'VE GOT TO WATCH THE BALL TILL THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT.

Oh~ That's Kamiyato for you
...AND HIT FROM THE CENTER TO THE RIGHT.
WAITING ON THE BALL IS THE ONLY METHOD
TO IDENTIFY LOW BALLS WITH CERTAINTY AND DEAL WITH THEM
THE REASON WHY ALL THE PLAYERS ARE SO INTENT ON MASTERING THIS TECHNIQUE
IS LIKELY BECAUSE THEY ALL ARE AWARE OF THEIR LACKING ABILITY TO SCORE COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS TEAM, I IMAGINE

NO, NO YUUKI AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PREVIOUS TEAM INDEED PILED UP COUNTLESS PRACTICE HOURS,
BUT THESE KIDS DON'T LOSE OUT TO THEM, I THINK!
YOUR SWING IS STILL TOO STIFF.
YOU'RE TRYING TOO HARD TO SEND THE BALL TO THE RIGHT
AND END UP LOWERING THE BAT'S HEAD.

WITH THE BAT'S BARREL SHIFTING AND ITS HEAD LOWERED, THE BATTED BALL WON'T FLY.
IN YOUR CASE, INSTEAD OF AIMING AT THE SECOND BASEMAN'S HEAD, TRY FOCUSING ON THE SHORTSTOP'S HEAD INSTEAD.
THE SHORT-STOP'S HEAD!
DON'T TRY TO PULL OR PUSH THE BALL FORCEFULLY,
AND THEN HIT IT WITH A STRONG SWING.
WAIT AND WATCH IT TILL IT REACHES YOUR CHEST,

WHOA!
THAT WAS GOOD!

YESSIR!
THE BALL WENT FLYING TO THE RIGHT NATURALLY...
CONTRIBUTE TO THE TEAM BY MAKING YOUR SWING WORK.
カキーン
Ok
WAIT AND OBSERVE CAREFULLY...
...AND HIT STRONGLY!

THE OPPONENT IS A LEFT-HANDED SIDEARM PITCHER THEY ALL ARE NOT USED TO...
BUT STILL, FOR RIGHT-HANDED BATTERS THE TRAJECTORY OF HIS THROW IS MORE VISIBLE
IF MAEZONO STARTS HITTING, THE TEAM'S SPIRITS ARE SURE TO RISE~~~
HE H TO ST AT SOMETIME
INDEED...
...IS IN THE HANDS OF RIGHT-HANDED BATTERS...
IT LOOKS LIKE THE KEY TO VICTORY IN THE MATCH AGAINST TEITOU...

HERE WE GO!
THIS ONE FELT PRETTY GOOD RIGHT?!
NO

NICE THROW, KAWA-KAMI!
OOH~~~ KAWAKAMI-SENPAI IS FULL OF FIGHTING SPIRIT
AS A FELLOW SIDEARM PITCHER, I CAN'T LOSE TO HIM!
NICE THROW
FLY!

I HAVEN'T PLAYED IN THE BLOCK GAMES
Fuh
BUT IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE NO WEAPONS.
TO BE READY TO GO ANY TIME.
THIS IS WHAT I STILL CAN DO AS I AM NOW.

FUH
OK, SAWA-MURA!
NICE THROW!
LOOK TO BE IN GREAT SHAPE, EHH...
THOSE PITCHES OF HIS...
SURE FEEL GOOD...

I TOLD YOU BEFORE I'M NOT SMILING!
THERE'S NO NEED TO SMILE EVERY SINGLE TIME THOUGH...
ignore
WHY DON'T YOU TRY COPYING SAWAMURA?
I REFUSE
TO YIELD!!!
HERE WE GO, KARIBA-AAA!!!
SURE! IN THE SOLIND VOLUME, IF NOTHING ELSE YOU'RE IN-DISPUTABLE FIRST!
...

OCTOBER, 1
THE DAY BEFORE THE MATCH
THE STARTING PITCHER IS FURUYA
THAT'S ALL ON THE STARTERS
YESSIR!

YESSIR!!!
AND WE WILL KNOW WHAT IT WILL BE ONLY TOMORROW, WHEN WE SEE IT FOR OURSELVES.
RAIN IS FORECAST FOR TOMORROW AS WELL.
BUT WEATHER IS NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN PREDICT WITH CERTAINTY.
YOU'RE BACK TO HITTING CLEANUP, ZONO, EH?
BOSS! I PRIDE MYSELF ON BEING THE SUNNY MAN!
REALLY
IN CONCLU-SION...
ALLOW ME TO SAY A FEW WORDS TO ALL OF YOU.
I'M THIRD BATTER...
...TRUE!
I'VE GOT TO DO IT...

OUR OPPONENT IS FAMOUS TEITOU
NATURALLY, THEY WILL NOT BE GENEROUS ENOUGH TO PRESENT US WITH AN EASY WIN
BUT NO NEED TO PAINT THE DEVIL BLACKER THAN HE IS,
AND NO NEED TO TRY AND DO ANYTHING OTHER THAN WHAT YOU ALWAYS DO
THE ENEMY IS WITHIN ONESELF!

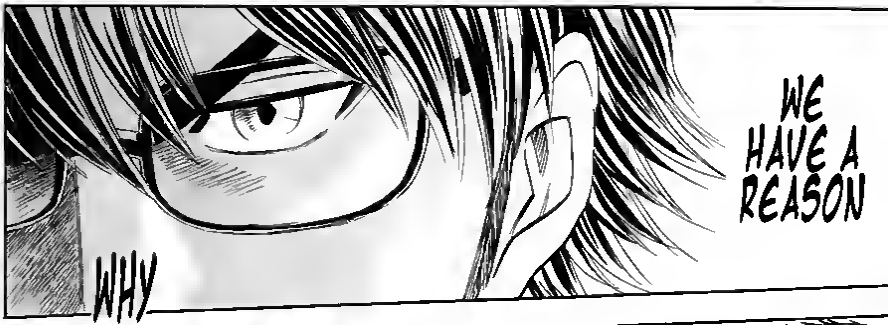
FIGHTING FULL OUT WITH THE POWER YOU'VE ALREADY GOT IN THE ACTUAL GAME IS THE SHORTEST PATH TO VICTORY!
AND THE TIME YOU SPENT PRACTICING IS NOT LOSING TO THAT OF THE RETIRED THIRD YEARS
全国制覇
IS THERE ANYONE AMONG THE TEAM WHO QUIT DURING THE SUMMER BREAK?
NO ONE DID, AM I RIGHT?

NO MATTER WHAT SITUATION YOU FIND YOURSELVES IN, DO NOT GIVE UP TILL THE VERY END.
YOU CAN DO IT, ALL OF YOU.
TAKE PRIDE IN THE SWEAT YOU ALL POURED.
SIGN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
全国制覇
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A...

LET'S DO OUR BEST TOMORROW!
...PARTING SPEECH...
A CALL ADDRESSED TO EACH PLAYER PERSONALLY.
WE WON'T LET YOU...
...

YOU GUYS WON'T LOSE.

IF WE WIN THE FALL TOURNAMENT, WE'RE AS GOOD AS AT THE SENBATSU.


WE HAVE A REASON

WHY
LOSING IS NOT AN OPTION FOR US.

THAT'S ALL! DISMISSED!
WE'VE GOT TO TAKE THIS PERSON TO KOUSHIEN--
FOR THIS DETERMINATION
THANK YOU SIR!!!
NOT TO BE DROWNED OUT BY THE RAIN BEATING ON THE ROOF, WE'VE GOT TO BE STRONG...

BOARD-
FALL WARD TOURNAMENT (SOFTBALL)
FALL TOKYO METROPOLIS HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL TOURNAMENT
OPEN 9:00 1ST GAME 10:00 2ND GAME 12:30
OPEN 2:00 1ST GAME 4:00 2ND GAME 6:30 3RD GAME 14:00
ENTRY FEE 1 PERSON: 700 YEN MIDDLE SCHOOLERS - 500 YEN

27 秋季区民大会【軟式野球】
1~10 秋季東京都高等学校野球大会
開場 9:00 開始時間順 式台1000 【第二試合12:30】
開場 8:00 【第一】9:00 【第二】11:30 【第三】14:00
入場料金 【一般】700円 【中高生】500円

STRONG!

3 CHI, EDOGAWA WARD BASEBALL STADIUM

FALL TOKYO METROPOLIS HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL TOURNAMENT

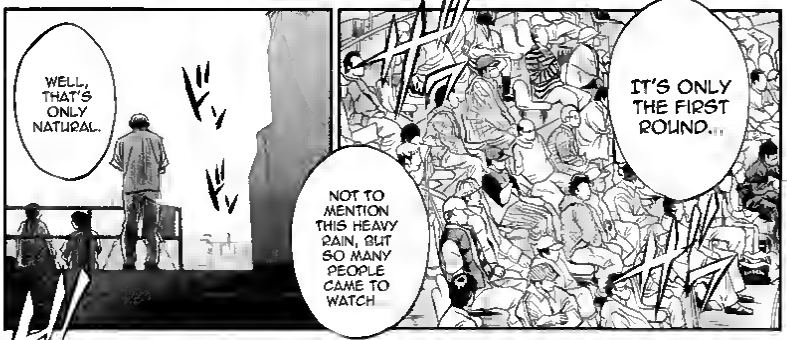
ROUND 1

TEITOU
(EAST TOKYO)

VS

SEIDOU
(WEST TOKYO)

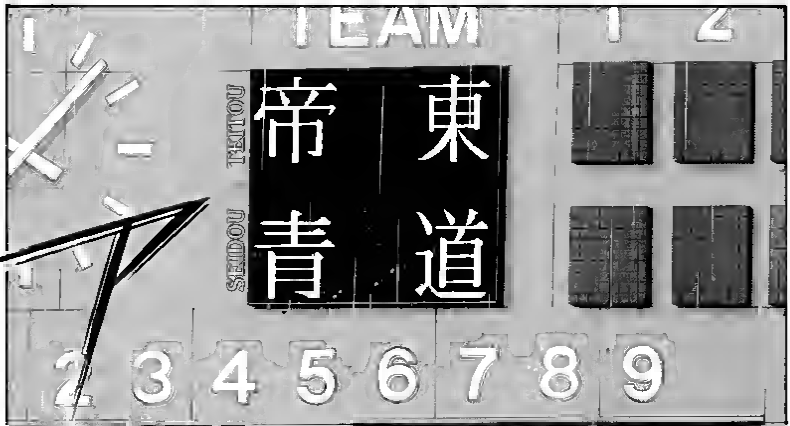
SIGN: EDOGAWA WARD BASEBALL STADIUM



A CLASH BETWEEN STRONG SCHOOLS OF THE EAST AND THE WEST
THIS IS AN EXCITING MATCHUP YOU CAN'T SEE IN THE SUMMER PRELIMINARIES, AFTER ALL

Anywhere we wait for~
Come, let's go~
Start running~
Start running~
T/N: THEY CHANT 'HI! OSHIMA NIGHT' ORIGINALLY A SUPPORT SONG OF FANS OF SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA FC CLUB. NOWADAYS A COMMON CHANT OF ALL SPORTS FANS EVEN FOR TEAMS OTHER THAN SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA AND FOR SPORTS OTHER THAN FOOTBALL/SOCCER.
GO, GO, TEITOU!
GO, GO, TEITOU!

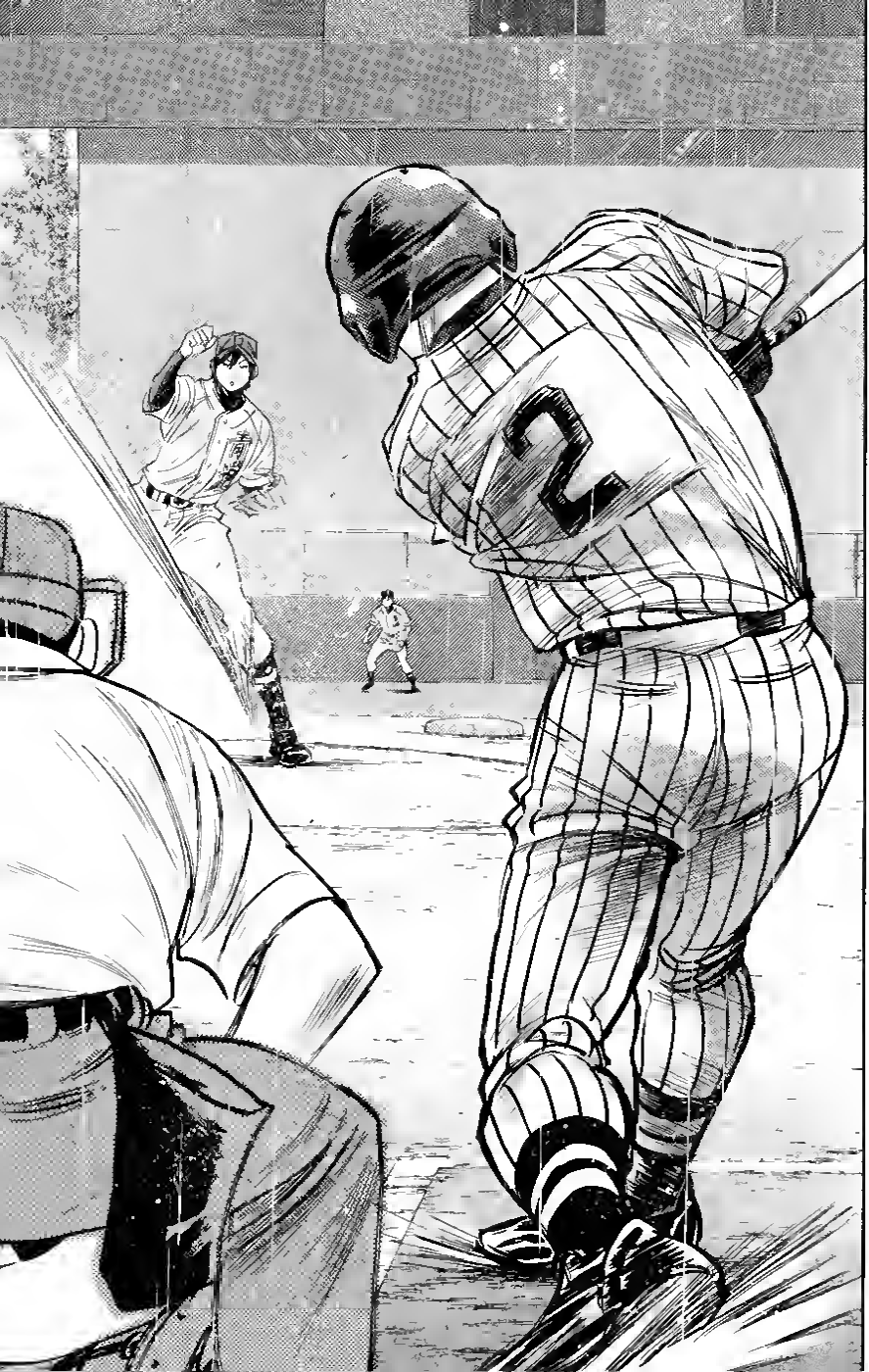
SLAM A HOMER, TEITOU!
KNOCK 'EM OUT, TEITOU!
CHAPTER 242
AFTER THE SUMMER


TEAM
1
2
東 帝
TEITOU
道 青
SEIDOU
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

TOP OF THE FIRST
2 OUTS, RUNNER ON SECOND AFTER A WALK ON 4 BALLS AND A BUNT
SINCE THIS PITCHER'S GAME OPENERS ARE NEVER STABLE,
TEITOU MUST WANT TO USE IT AND HIT OFF HIM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WHILE THEY HAVE THE CHANCE, I IMAGINE
Fuh
NUMBER 4 CATCHER
INUI

PUSH 'EM, PUSH 'EM, TEITOU!
PUSH 'EM, PUSH 'EM, TEITOU!

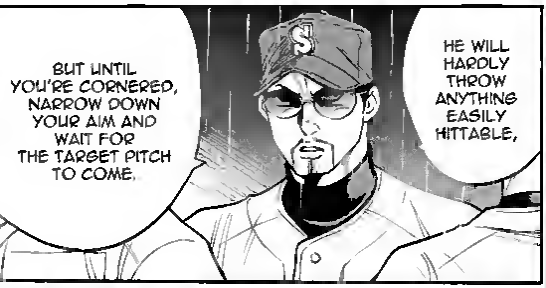
S

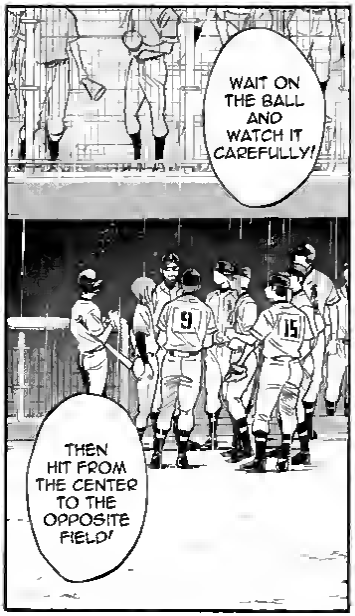


THE FIRST YEAR FURUYA'S PROBLEMATIC GAME OPENER!
YEAH!
NICE PITCHING, FURUYA!
AFTER RETIRING THE OPPONENTS' MAIN CANNON, HE'S OFF TO A GOOD START.
HE SHUT THEM OUT BY FORCE..
YEAH... HE ONLY USED FASTBALLS
HIS PITCHING LOOKS TO BE IN GOOD SHAPE..
HE WILL START LOSING RUNS EN MASSE ANY MOMENT NOW...!
THE OPPONENTS ARE ALREADY SEEING RIGHT THROUGH FURUYA'S PITCHES!
HE DID HIT YOUR PITCH PRETTY FAR, THOUGH.
SO HOW WAS IT?

IT FELT LIKE THE BALL WAS MADE OF LEAD.
EH?!
THE PRESSURE OF HIS PITCH I HAD A TASTE OF IN MY FIRST AT-BAT.. IT STRUCK ME LIKE A LIGHTNING THEN AND THERE ..
LIGHTNING SURE LOVES STRIKING YOU, HUH?!
Eh?!
Hey!
JUST LET HIM GET INTO THE GROOVE AND SEE WHERE IT GETS YOU!
HE'LL MAKE THE WHOLE AUDIENCE ON THE BLEACHERS HIS ALLIES, YOU CAN BET ON IT!
KENGO.
TAIYOU.
HE'S A MONSTER, THROUGH AND THROUGH.

WE AIN'T GONNA GIVE UP THE INITIATIVE!
GO AND CAPTIVATE 'EM, TAIYOU!
CHARM ALL THOSE LITTLE NAIVE BOYS AND GIRLS WITH YOUR PITCHING!
AREN'T THESE TWO SELLING HIM FOR MORE THAN HE'S WORTH?

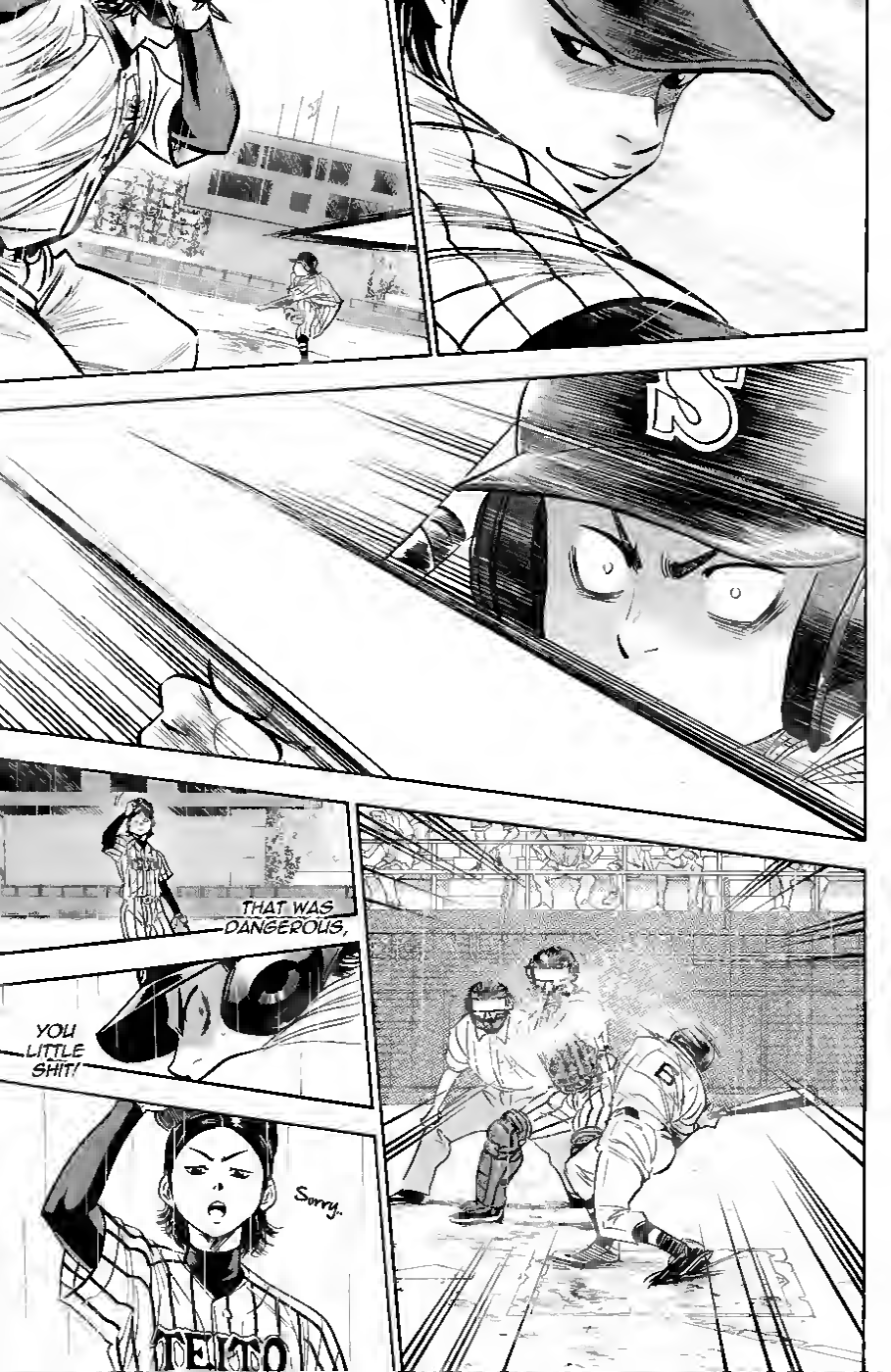

BUT UNTIL YOU'RE CORNERED, NARROW DOWN YOUR AIM AND WAIT FOR THE TARGET PITCH TO COME.
HE WILL HARDLY THROW ANYTHING EASILY HITTABLE,


WAIT ON THE BALL AND WATCH IT CAREFULLY!
THEN HIT FROM THE CENTER TO THE OPPOSITE FIELD!

FOR THE FIRST ROTATION...
...YOU CAN COMPLETELY IGNORE ALL THE LOW PITCHES!
2
WHILE MUKAI-KUN IS ALSO A FIRST YEAR, UNLIKE FURUYA-KUN HE HAS THE KOUSHIEN EXPERIENCE TO FALL BACK ON...

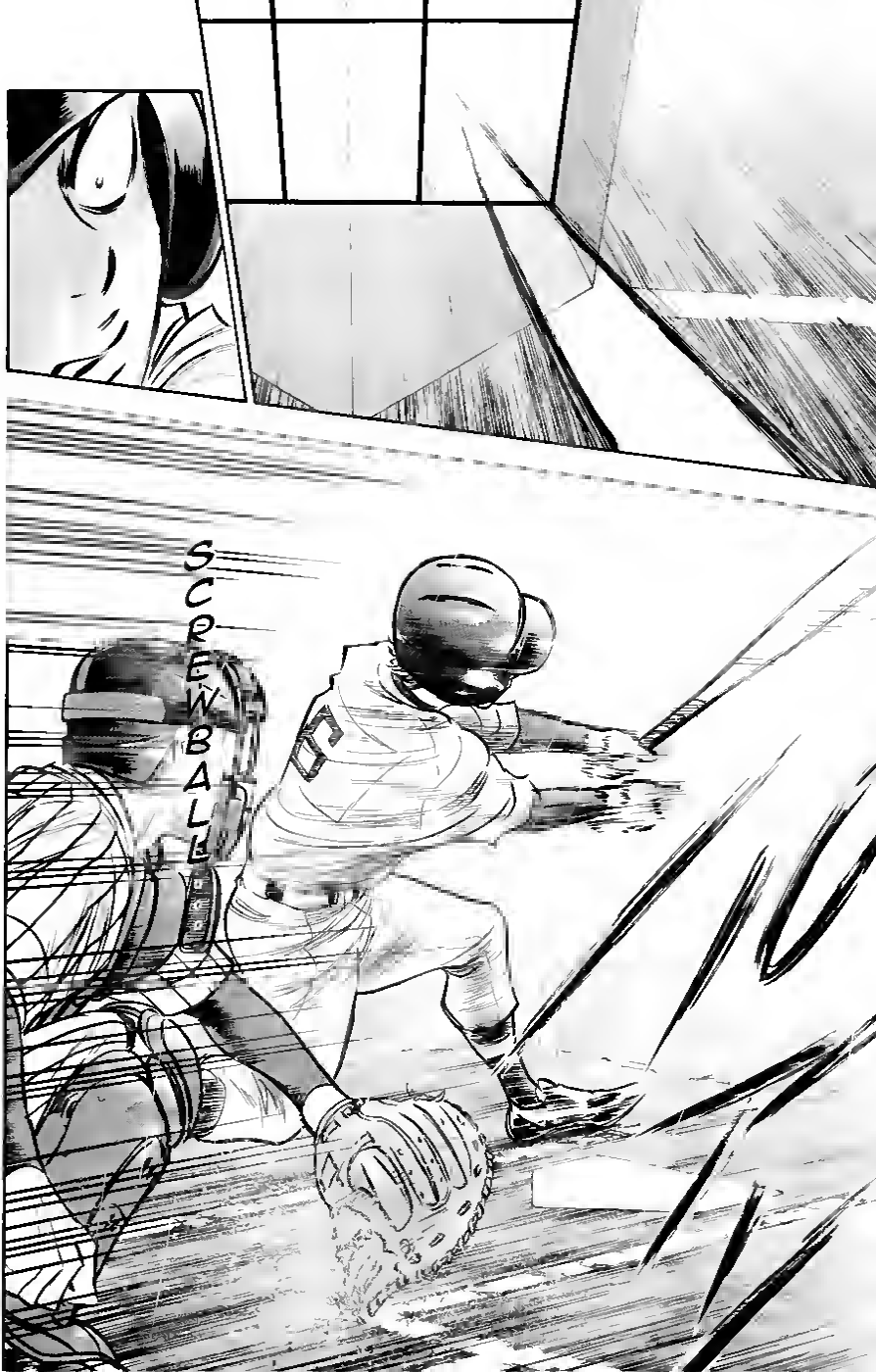
WHAT KIND OF PITCHING WILL HE SHOW US AFTER THIS SUMMER?

STRIKE!
NO EASY COURSES ALRIGHT...


THAT WAS DANGEROUS,
YOU LITTLE SHIT!
Sorry.
TEITO

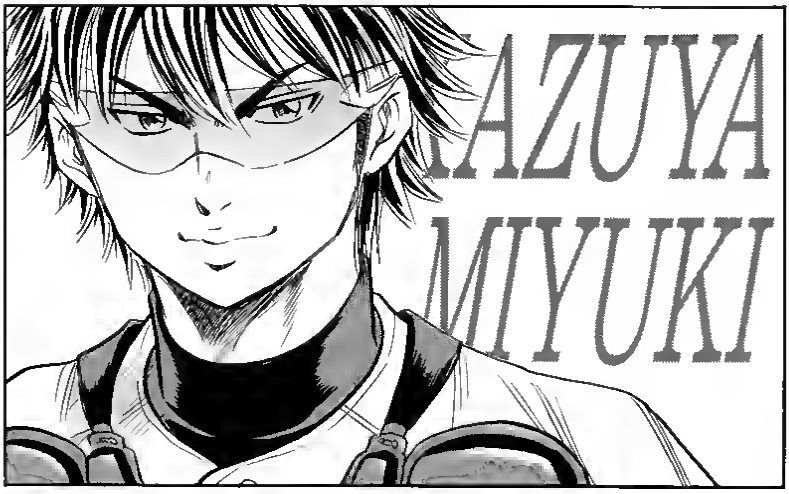
...IT WAS NOT...?
FAR CORNER...
STRIKE!

FROM LOW AND INSIDE TO HIGH AND INSIDE
AND ALSO TO LOW AND OUTSIDE
AFTER ALL THOSE PITCHES TO THE DIFFERENT CORNERS, TO THE BATTER, THE STRIKE ZONE MUST BE FEELING BROADER THAN IT ACTUALLY IS.
LOW AND AWAY...

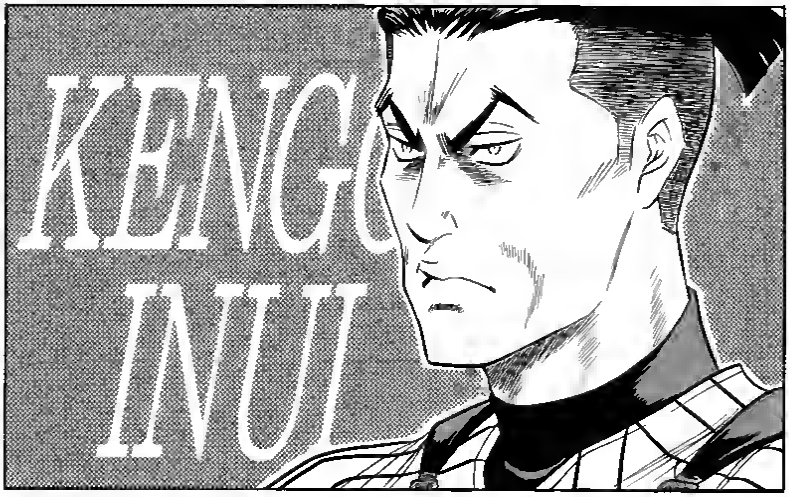

SCREWBALL

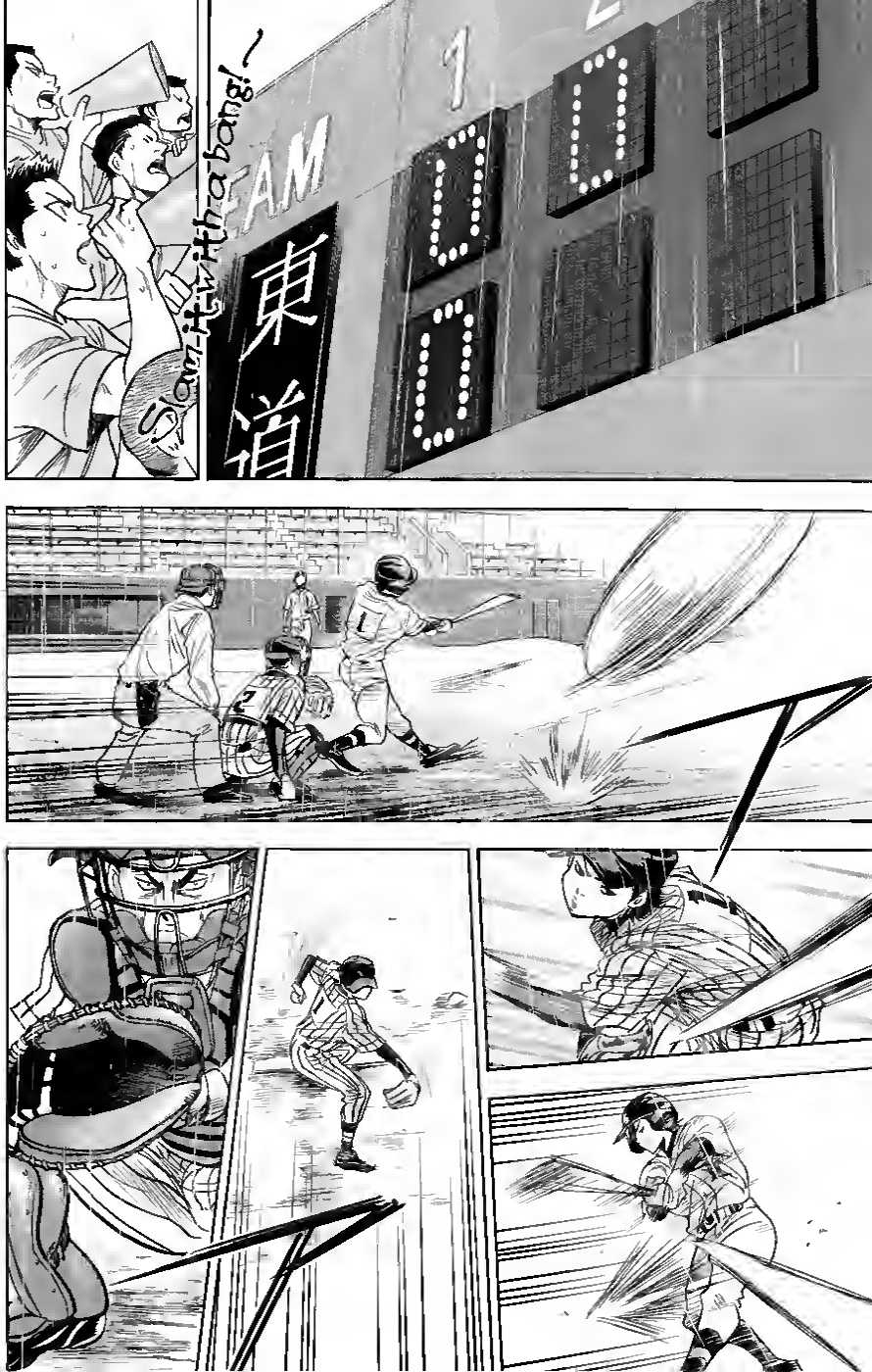
Ugh
STRIKE!
BATTER OUT!
The drop is sharp
HE SWUNG AT THAT INVOLUNTARY, DIDN'T HE.
YEAH... I'M SURE SEIDOU DIDN'T COME HERE WITHOUT A COUNTER TO THOSE LOW BREAKING BALLS, BUT...
EVEN IF IN YOUR HEAD YOU UNDERSTAND IT, YOUR BODY STILL ENDS UP RESPONDING TO MY LOW PITCHES.
RIGHT?

I CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF IT!
THIS FEELING OF TRIUMPH THROUGH DOMINATION...



CHAPTER 243
KEYMEN




Son-ti-with-a-bang!~
TEAM
東道
1
2
0
0
0
0

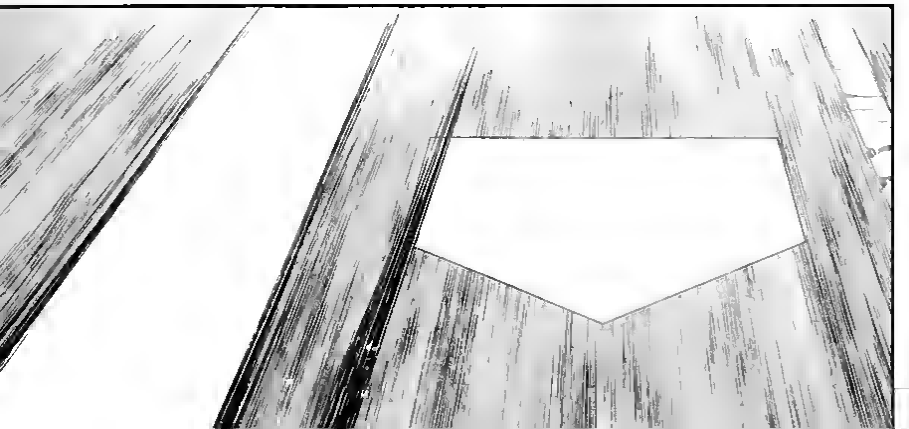
NOT!
STRIKE!
BATTER OUT!

OUT ON A GROUNDER TO THIRD
TODAY'S UMPIRE IS TOO LAX ABOUT LOW PITCHES, DON'T YOU THINK?
THAT ONE WAS A STRIKE...?
2 OUTS
2 OUTS ~~!
THE WIDE
CONFIDENTLY STILLING EVEN THOSE LOW PITCHES WITH A DRY SOUND

THAT CATCHER...
IT'S NOT ONLY MUKAI'S CONTROL WE'RE DEALING HERE WITH!
HE'S EXTREMELY GOOD AT CATCHING MUKAI'S STUFF..!
THAT FIRST YEAR, MUKAI IS ONE HELL OF A FIND.
KENGO, MY BOY...

WITH PITCHES THAT USE THE ZONE CORNERS SO WIDELY AND HEAVILY...
HE THROWS WITH COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING WHAT A BATTER WILL HATE THE MOST
EVEN THOUGH HE'S BARELY OUT OF MIDDLE SCHOOL, HE'S ONE SHREWD BRAT
Achoo!
WELL... HE ALSO GETS DRUNK ON HIS OWN PITCHING THOUGH...
T/N: HIS NAME, "TAIYOU", MEANS "SUN"
TAIYOU WON'T BE ABLE TO SHINE
IF HIS CATCHER IS LOUSY,
TO LET HIM THRIVE
OR TO KILL HIM...

* THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS TRAINING VARIES DEPENDING ON AN INDIVIDUAL.



STRIKE TWO!
NICE THROW!

YEAH, HE DOES... SEIDOU SEEMS TO BE TRYING TO NARROW DOWN THEIR AIM,
HE KEEPS HIS PITCHES PERFECTLY LOW.
BUT HE JUST DOESN'T THROW ANYTHING EASY TO TARGET.
THEY'RE STILL FORCED TO TAKE THEIR CHANCES AND TRY TO HIT THOSE DIFFICULT PITCHES IN THE END.
EVEN THOUGH THEY WAIT AND PERSEVERE,

THREE OUTS!
CHANGE!

NICE PITCHING, TAIYOU!
TEITO
PITCH TO CONTACT MORE!
BRINGING DOWN THIS STRONGHOLD KNOWN AS THE *INVINCIBLE LEGION* IS, BY NO MEANS, GOING TO BE EASY.
MUKAI-KUN'S PITCHING WITH ITS HEAVY USE OF THE CORNERS,
COMPLETE WITH THE STEEL WALL DEFENSE BACKING HIM UP.

TOKI
青道

TOP OF THE THIRD
NUMBER 9
MUKAI

Ow!
1 OUT!
YEAH THEY HAVEN'T THROWN A SINGLE BREAKING BALL YET.
THEY'RE USING THE OPPOSITE OF MUKAI-KUN'S TACTICS,
SHUTTING THEIR OPPONENTS OUT BY PURE FORCE.

MIYUKI-KUN'S GAME CALLING IS EVEN MORE AGGRESSIVE THAN USUAL.
TOKYO
NUMBER 1 KAIIYAMA

YEAH
KAAN
KAAN
OHHH, TEITOU'S SECOND HIT!
IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT THEY'RE NOT GONNA DO THEIR OPPONENTS A FAVOR AND GET RETIRED EASILY
IN THE FIRST INNING, THERE WAS AN ATTACK RELYING ON A BUNT
NOW THAT THE ROTATION'S GONE BACK TO THE TOP AGAIN, THEY MIGHT BE GETTING READY TO LAUNCH A REAL OFFENSIVE, I THINK?

I DON'T NEED FURUYA THINKING ABOUT ANYTHING UNNECESSARY NOW ESPECIALLY
AND THIS PAIN, TO MAKE THINGS WORSE
TODAY'S OPPONENTS AIN'T SOMEONES PETTY TRICKS WILL WORK ON
I WANT YOU TO COMPLETELY DEVOTE YOURSELF TO YOUR FIGHTS WITH THEIR BATTERS.
JUST SHUT THEM OUT WITH THE SHEER POWER OF YOUR PITCHES!

INDEED
THEY'RE STILL SO DARING, DESPITE THERE BEING A RUNNER
THEY'RE PRIORITIZING CONCENTRATING ON THE BATTER RATHER THAN ON ANY RUNNER, IT SEEMS
THE BATTERY AREN'T HESITATING IN THE SLIGHTEST...

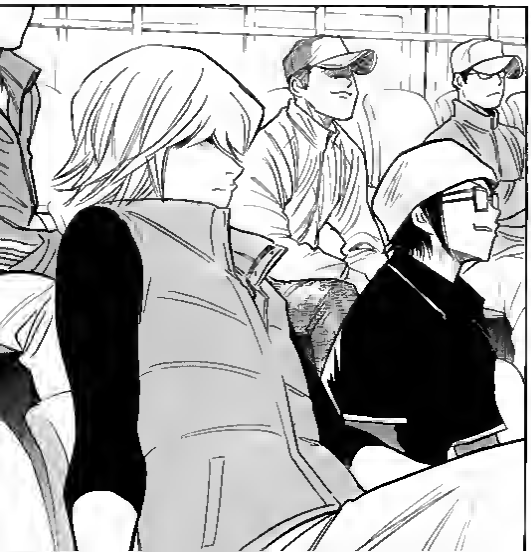
HIT AND RUN!
..NO.
STEAL!

WHA?!
MISSED...!
YOU TAKE CARE
OF THE BATTERS.

THE FIRST BASE RUNNER IS THROWN OUT AT SECOND BASE!
HIT AND RUN ENDS IN A FAILURE !!!
AND I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE RUNNERS.

Ace of Diamond

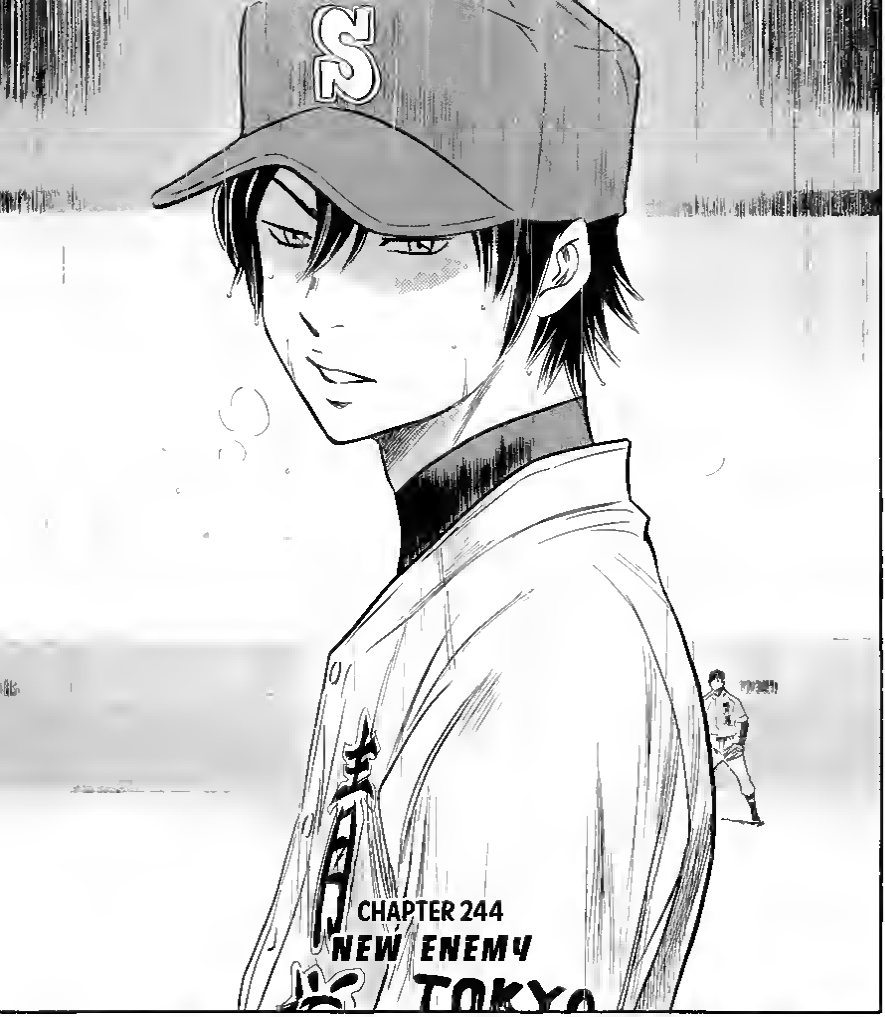
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THIS DOWNPOUR IS GONNA BE STOPPING ANY TIME SOON, THOUGH
DIDN'T THE FORECAST SAY IT WOULD BE CLEARING IN THE AFTERNOON?
帝東
青道
UMPIRE
473285961
643219578



DACHI

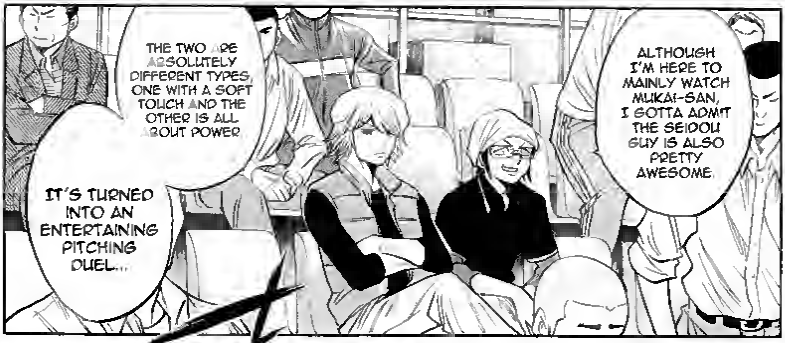
IT HAD TO HAPPEN WITH A GOOD GAME LIKE THIS, TOO

TOP OF THE FOURTH
2
6
NUMBER 6
BABAZONO
2 OUTS!
2 OUTS!
PITCH TO CONTACT!

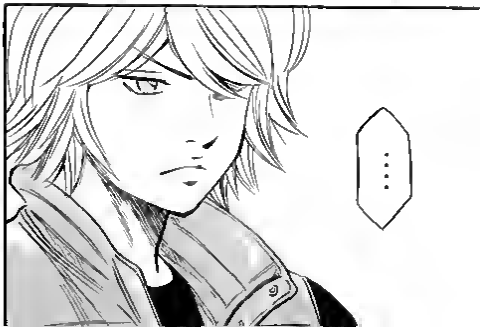

CHAPTER 244
NEW ENEMY

STRIKE! BATTER OUT!
STRIKE-OUT!

HIGH-HANDED POWER PLAY...
I WANT TO CHANGE MY UNDERSHIRT NOW...
FURUYA, NICE PITCHING.
...HOW CRUDE!
GOOD, FURUYA !!!


THE TWO ARE ABSOLUTELY DIFFERENT TYPES, ONE WITH A SOFT TOUCH AND THE OTHER IS ALL ABOUT POWER.
ALTHOUGH I'M HERE TO MAINLY WATCH MUKAI-SAN, I GOTTA ADMIT THE SEIDOU GUY IS ALSO PRETTY AWESOME.
IT'S TURNED INTO AN ENTERTAINING PITCHING DUEL...

KOUSHUU, FOR WHICH ONE YOU'D WANNA TRY CATCHING?


.....

OHH!
THE STEEL WALL IN ACTION!
FROM THE START OF THE MOVE-MENT TO TOSSING THE BALL TAKES THEM NO TIME AT ALL!

SEIDOU HAD NO HITS SO FAR.
THEY KEEP PERSISTENTLY TRYING THOUGH

AHH~~~~ RIGHT INTO HIS HANDS!
HARUCCHI IS FALLING INTO HIS USUAL BAD HABITS AGAIN...
THAT'S MEAN OF YOU!
SINCE THE PITCHES ARE THROWN TO THE CORNERS OF THE STRIKE ZONE WITH PRECISION, THEY FLY RIGHT TO WHERE THE FIELDERS ARE POSITIONED
THEY'RE STARTING TO HIT TO THE OUTFIELD, BUT...
WAIT AND WATCH...

THEN HIT STRONGLY!
STRIKE! BATTER OUT!
PHEW
What a swing
...BUT ONLY IF HE MANAGES TO ACTUALLY HIT THE BALL WITH IT.

GET OVER IT AND MOVE ON!
WHY DID HE ENTRUST HITTING CLEANUP TO THAT PLAYER AGAIN, I WONDER ?
I WOULD LEAVE HIM OFF THE STARTING LINEUP ALTOGETHER
YESSIR!!!
CHOOSING A PITCH TO TARGET AND PATIENTLY CONTINUING OUR ATTACKS IS THE ONLY WAY TO GO ABOUT IT
HH!
T
T

TOP OF THE FIFTH
TEITOU!
THE RAIN IS GETTING HEAVIER AGAIN
GO, GO, TEITOU!
PUSH 'EM, PUSH 'EM, TEITOU!
TEITO

FURUYA!
EVEN THOUGH I JUST CHANGED MY UNDERSHIRT, IT'S ALREADY
MAKE SURE YOU SWING YOUR ARM PROPERLY!
HOW MANY EXTRA SETS OF CLOTHES I HAVE LEFT, AGAIN...?
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?
IF THE RAIN GETS ANY WORSE, IT WILL START TO SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE MATCH, NO?
REMIND ME AFTER HOW MANY INNINGS THE GAME CAN BE CONSIDERED FINISHED?
IN RAINY WEATHER, IT CAN GET CALLED AFTER 7 INNINGS.
CURSE YOU~~~~ RAIN~~!!!
WEREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE THE SUNNY MAN WHO CAN MAKE IT STOP?
I DESPISE YOU, WEATHER!

SAFETY BUNT!!!

IT'S GONNA CROSS THE FOUL LINE...
JUST BARELY
HGH... BECAUSE OF THE RAIN, IT STOPPED...
TOO LATE FOR FIRST BASE---
TEITOU'S LEADOFF BATTER GETS ON BASE!

MY HAND GETS WET IN NO TIME EVEN AFTER USING THE ROSIN
DAMN

ONLY WHEN IT'S OUR TURN TO BE ON THE DEFENSIVE?
WHY DOES IT FEEL LIKE THE RAIN IS GETTING HEAVIER
IF MY GRIP ON THE BALL FAILS EVEN A LITTLE, THERE'LL BE NO KNOWING WHERE IT WILL FLY.
FOCUS!
THEY'RE WAITING FOR A WEAK PITCH FROM YOU, THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT!
THE CONDITIONS ARE THE SAME FOR OUR OPPONENTS AS WELL!

COME AT THEM HARD AND FAST!

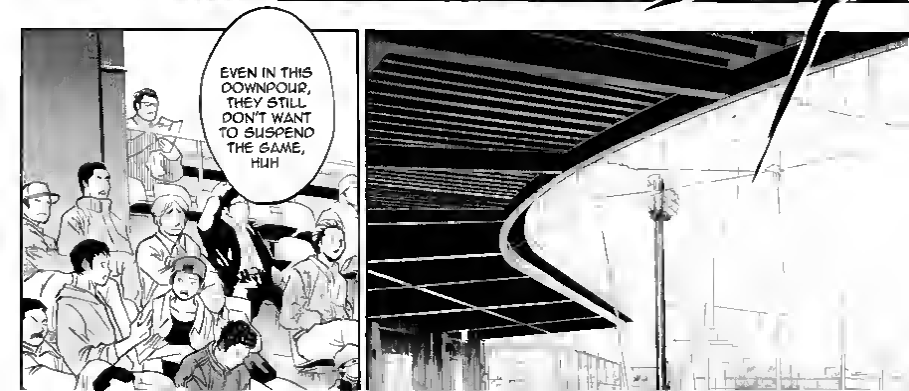
BALL
FOUR!
AHH..... THE RAIN KEEPS GETTING HEAVIER
GIVE HIM A FRESH ROSIN!
THIS IS ENOUGH TO CARRY THE BALL OFF THE COURSE, HUH
青道

SORRY, KID.
BUT THE CELESTIAL DEITIES UP IN THE HEAVENS ARE ON OUR SIDE...
DAMN... THIS IS SO ANNOYING...

BALL TWO!
WAS IT A BREAKING BALL?
NO... LOOKED LIKE A FASTBALL TO ME.
THIS RAIN IS BOTHERING YOU?
IT SEEMS LIKE IT REALLY IS A DIFFICULT TASK TO KEEP A SURE ENOUGH GRIP ON THE BALL FOR ANYONE WHEN IT'S POURING DOWN THIS BAD.

...YES... BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID MY FINGERS MIGHT SLIP...
BUT... JUST NOW, WHEN THROWING, YOU FLUNG THE BALL DOWN INTO THE GROUND TO MAKE SURE IT WOULDN'T END UP FLYING HIGH, RIGHT?
GRIN
NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT A WILD POWER-LADEN PITCH FLYING HIGH OVERHEAD
THAT'S THE WAY TO GO!

CHAPTER 245
COLD-RAIN



NO OUTS, RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND.
TEITOU MUST WANT TO ADVANCE THEIR RUNNER TO THIRD IN THIS SITUATION, NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES
THERE IS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY OF A PASSED BALL.
I DON'T NEED TO FORCE MYSELF HERE AND GO FOR ANYTHING OTHER THAN A PITCH RIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE, RIGHT ?
2 BALLS...
T
TEIT

LET'S GET THEM!
ONE BY ONE!
LET'S GET OUTS ONE AT A TIME!
パン
パン

COME ON!

BALL TO THIRD!
AGH
SO POWERFUL!

FORCE-OUT ON THIRD!!!
THE OTHER RUNNER CAN'T ADVANCE!
FAILING TO ADVANCE TO THIRD SURE STINGS, BUT
TEITO
NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT NOW
13
SKILLFUL FIELDING BY PITCHER FURUYA!

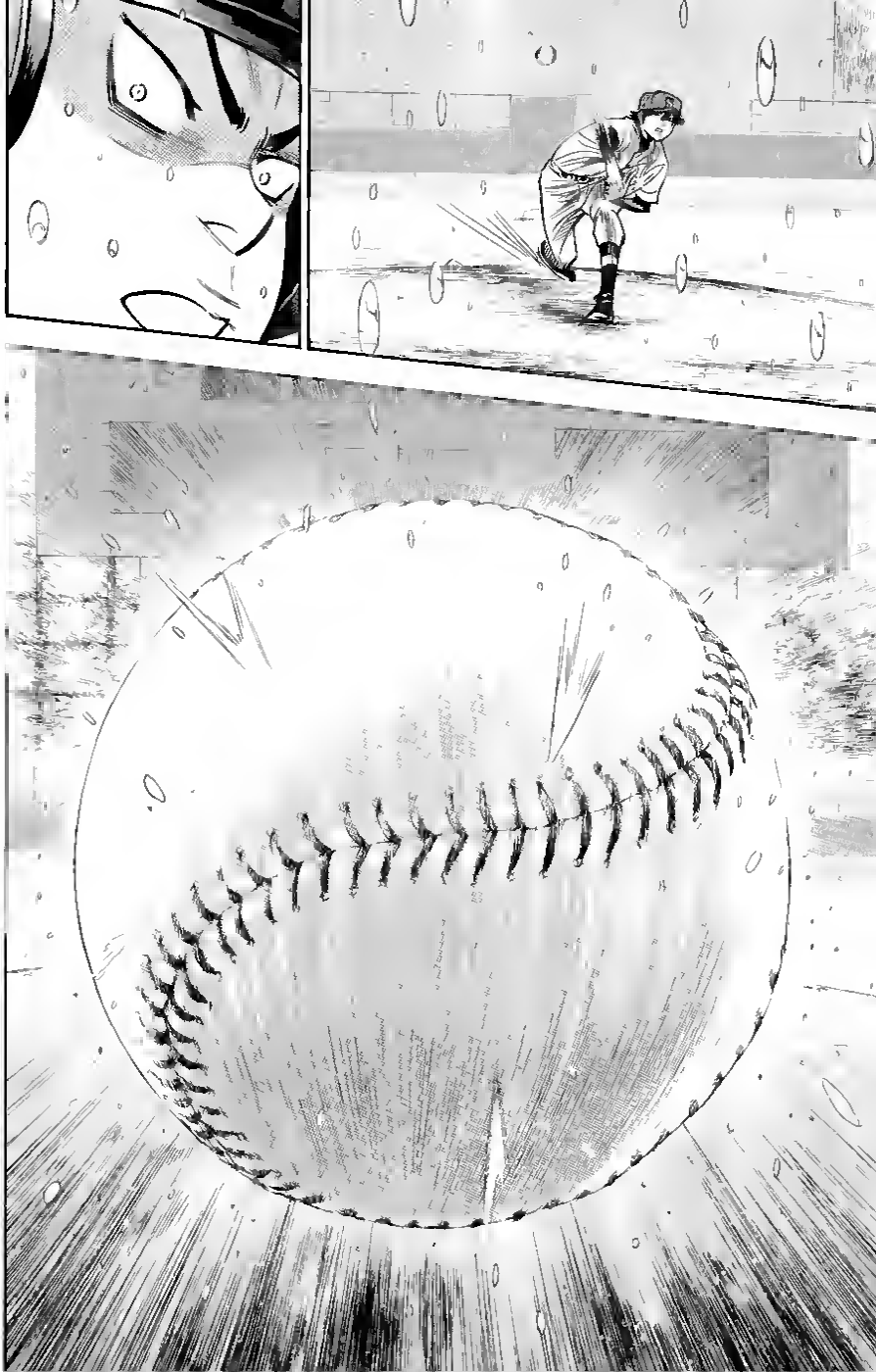
THIS FIGHT IS ABOUT FASTBALLS!
KAJI-YAMA,
UP TIL! THIS POINT THE OPPONENTS HAVEN'T REALLY THROWN ANY BREAKERS!
SLAM IT IN WITH A BAM!

S-SPLITTER, HERE?!
.....
THEY'RE NOT SCARED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A PASSED BALL AT ALL?!

SO COME WITH ALL YOU'RE WORTH!
IF THE BALL BOUNCES OFF THE GROUND I GUARANTEE YOU I WON'T PASS IT BEHIND ME

2 outs

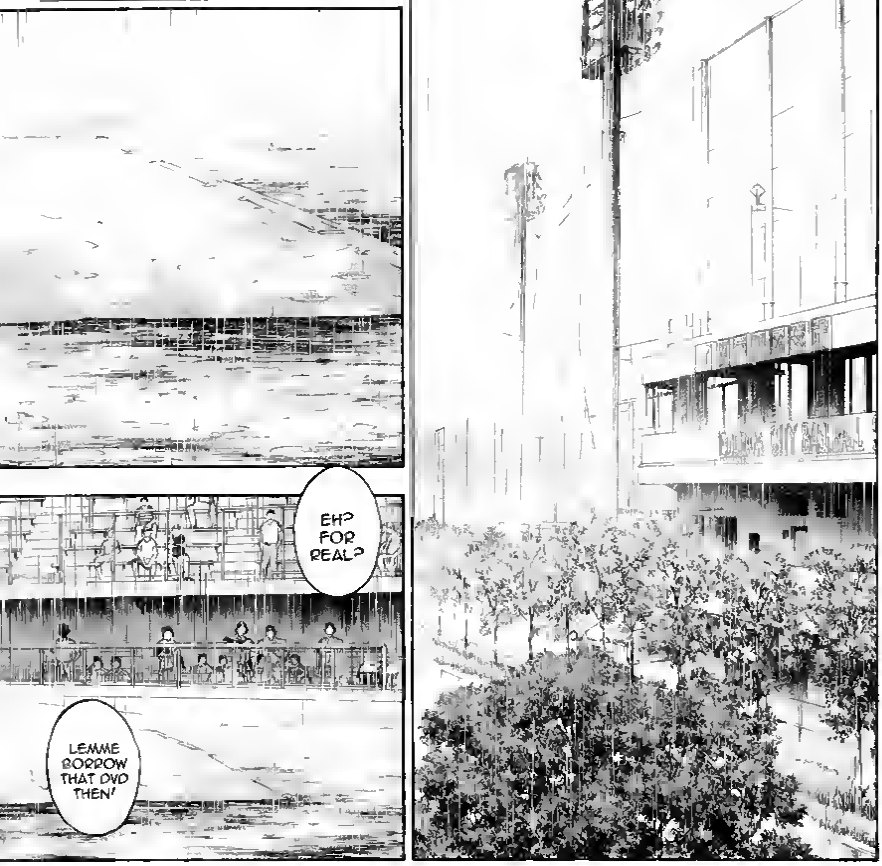
THE RAIN ISN'T THE ENEMY.
THE ENEMY IS WITHIN ONESELF!



STRIKE-OUT!
THE BATTER IS SHUT OUT BY THE SHEER FORCE OF THE LAST PITCH!
THE DANGEROUS SITUATION WITH NO OUTS AND RUNNERS ON FIRST AND SECOND IS RESOLVED WITH NO RUNS LOST!!!

THIS KID...
NICE PITCHING, FURUYA!
Wow
NICE PITCH-ING!
YOU SURE GAVE ME A SCARE, THOUGH! HEY!!!

IMPRESSIVE CONCENTRATION.
YOU DID WELL PULLING THROUGH!
ALRIGHT!
LET'S DO IT IN THIS INNING!
IT'S OUR TURN NOW TO PUT SOME PRESSURE ON THEM.
TOKK


EH? FOR REAL?
LEMME BORROW THAT DVD THEN!
SORRY, BLURAYS ONLY FOR ME.
WHAT AM I GONNA DO WITH THE HUGE NUMBER OF DVDS I HAVE?!
HUH? SCREW YOU!
DON'T ASK ME.

CHAPTER 246
AFTER RESTART
IF THIS SPELL OF BREAK GOES ON FOR MUCH LONGER, THEY MIGHT EVEN HAVE TO RE-PLAY THE GAME AT A LATER DATE.
THE RAIN ISN'T STOPPING

OISHO!
I WILL!!!
SAWAMURA, MAYBE IT'S ENOUGH 2 NOW?
NO!!! I WILL THROW MORE!
THE GAME'S ON HOLD YET THERE'S STILL SOMEONE TRYING FOR SOME APPEAL EH
WHO'S THAT, I WONDER

NO ONE KNOWS WHEN THIS RAIN'S GONNA LET UP, BUT HE'S STILL GOING ON
HE MUST BE AN IDIOT OR SOMETHING, RIGHT?
I COULD'VE KEPT GOING IN THE RAIN, TOO, NO PROBLEMO?
RIGHT. MAYBE.
HEY, SAWAMURA!!! HOW MUCH LONGER ARE YOU GONNA KEEP THROWING?!
YOU REALLY STAND OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB, YOU KNOW?

I'M NOT DOING IT JUST FOR APPEAL!!!
BUT GOTTA ADMIT, YOU'RE REAL SKILLED IN APPEAL!
I THINK I'LL LEARN FROM YOU SERIOUSLY
IF I DON'T MOVE, I WON'T CALM DOWN...
THAT BASTARD...

HE'S CLIMBED TO THE NEXT STAGE AGAIN...

FURUYA IS AWE-INDUCING TODAY...
WHEN THE RAIN GOT HEAVIER, HIS AWESOMENESS ONLY INCREASED.

YOU'RE RELAXING WAY TOO MUCH, MORON!
MAKE SURE YOU CAN PROPERLY START UP YOUR ENGINE AGAIN, GOT IT?
LIKE A BOSS!!!
NNN
10

THE GAME WILL REOPEN WITH OUR OFFENSIVE MAKE SURE YOUR SHOULDER DOESN'T GET COLD IN THE MEANTIME...
I'LL LET YOU BORROW MINE THEN.
HOW MANY EXTRA SETS OF CLOTHES YOU HAVE LEFT?
..THIS .. AND 1 MORE...
THAT DRIVE...

FRANKLY, I WISH THE GAME HADN'T BEEN SUSPENDED AT THAT POINT...
MUKAI'S PITCH COUNT?
62, SIR.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THIS BREAK DESTROYED MUKAI'S RHYTHM.
HE DIDN'T THROW A SINGLE HIGH FLYING PITCH,
BUT AT LEAST WE MADE HIM THROW A LOT...
...
WHEN HE THROWS ANY WEAK PITCH, DON'T LET IT PASS! MAKE SURE YOU HIT!
YESSIR!!!
THIS LOOKS TO BECOME A LENGTHLY BREAK

IT MEANS THE FIELD'S CONDITION LEAVES SO MUCH TO BE DESIRED THAT THE GAME CAN'T BE REOPENED IMMEDIATELY
THAT SAID, I'M SURE THEY DON'T PARTICULARLY WANT TO GET BEHIND THE SCHEDULE EITHER...
TILL NOW, THE TWO PITCHERS WERE ENGAGED IN A PITCHING WAR, WITH NEITHER YIELDING ANY GROUND...
BUT THIS BREAK!..
WHAT EFFECTS WILL IT HAVE ON THE GAME...?

CAUSE WE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO COME HERE AGAIN TOMORROW
I ONLY HOPE THEY WON'T CALL THE GAME A RAINOUT TO BE RE-PLAYED TOMORROW,
THEY'RE PROBABLY GOING TO SEIDOU..
BY THE WAY, I SPIED HAYAKAWA ON THE BLEACHERS
WITH A GIRL, NO LESS!
AND THERE ALSO WAS A GUY WHO LOOKED SUSPICIOUSLY LIKE KUROKI FROM JOUNAN SENIOR

I FEEL BAD FOR COACH KAWASAKI, BUT STILL...
WE GOTTA DECIDE SOON ON THE HIGH SCHOOL WE'RE GONNA GO TO, Y'KNOW
OH, THEY RESUMED THE GAME

BOTTOM OF THE FIFTH
1
—Sharpshoot
T
TEITO

JUST AFTER THE RESTART OF THE GAME, SUDDENLY A TWO BASE HIT!!!
HE CORRECTLY SURMISED THAT THE FIRST PITCH WOULD BE
A FASTBALL TO THE OUTSIDE AND WAITED SPECIFICALLY FOR IT...

A PERFECT CHANCE TO SCORE THE FIRST POINT.
NO OUTS, RUNNER ON SECOND.
WITH A BREAK THIS LONG,
KEEPING THE FOCUS AND DRIVE IS APPARENTLY HARD EVEN FOR MUKAI-KUN.
TEITO
IS TAIYOU GOING TO BE OK...?
NO NEED TO WORRY, DOLT.
TEITO

HE'S NOT SO FRAGILE AS TO LOSE IT BECAUSE OF SOME RAIN!
DONCCHA MAKE LIGHT OF HIS EXPERIENCE OF ALWAYS BEING THE ACE ALL THROUGHOUT HIS MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS!
TEITO

NUMBER 5, PITCHER, FURUYA-KUN.
THEY'D WANT TO PLAY IT SAFE HERE, RIGHT?
AGREED WITH HOW FURUYA'S DOING ON THE MOUND TODAY IF THEY GET A 1 RUN LEAD, THEIR VICTORY IS PRACTICALLY GUARANTEED...
FURUYA! KNEES!
THE POINT IS TO CUSHION IT WITH YOUR KNEES!
SAWAMURA, DON'T LEAVE THE DUGOUT!
THEY'LL FIGURE OUT OUR SIGNS FROM YOUR LOSE!
0 0/3

TBC IN VOLUME 29

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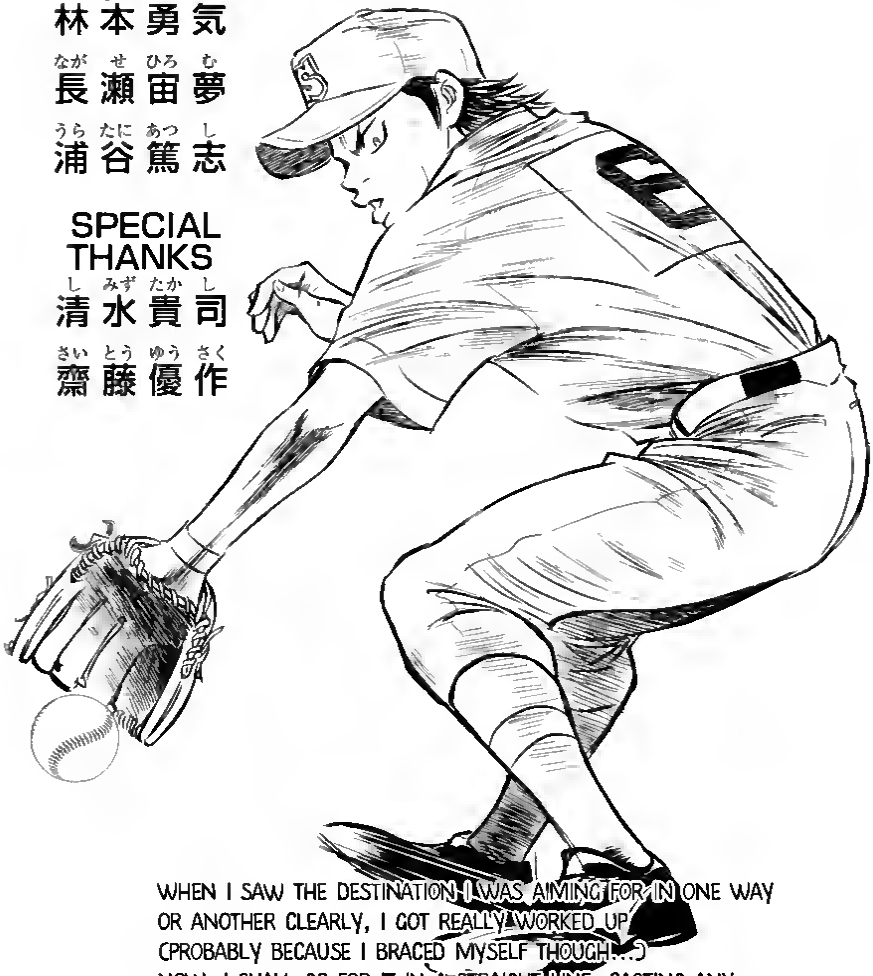

WHEN I SAW THE DESTINATION I WAS AIMING FOR IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER CLEARLY, I GOT REALLY WORKED UP. (PROBABLY BECAUSE I BRACED MYSELF THOUGH...)
NOW, I SHALL GO FOR IT IN A STRAIGHT LINE, CASTING ANY DOUBTS ASIDE!

TERAJIMA YUUJI

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